



## AMERICA'S CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

IT'S OUR TIME

Climate change is a global crisis that we must confront now.

The majority of Americans believe climate change is real and humans are contributing to it. And they are demanding action by this generation. Yet climate deniers keep winning political battles that result in our doing nothing.

We need bold action and enduring solutions. America's Climate Change Plan will reduce emissions in line with the most aggressive targets set by the world's scientists and achieve 100 percent clean, net-zero emissions as soon as possible, and no later than 2050. Our plan will drive economic growth for the 21st century and create millions of high-paying jobs.

Our plan intentionally engages a broad coalition of Americans to ensure that our approach to climate change not only is sufficiently ambitious, but will endure across American elections and administrations.

To combat this crisis as fast as possible, we must reignite America's ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit in a shared mission. We must use every diplomatic and economic tool available to assert America's leadership in this critical fight. We must do the hard work to build a diverse coalition here at home, and we can, once again, lead the world.

### Highlights of America's Climate Change Plan:

- Establish an historic, national commitment to conserve 30 percent of America's lands and oceans by 2030, setting an ambitious new conservation target for the world.
- Create a Climate X Option to require power providers to offer zero-emission energy to every household and business, and provide more opportunities for Americans to choose clean vehicles and other technologies.
- Support American agriculture to lead the global fight against climate change.
- Launch a 2030 Climate Challenge to enable states to compete for federal infrastructure funding by aggressively reducing emissions and climate risks.

- Create a Climate Bank to catalyze \$10 trillion in private sector investment in innovation and infrastructure that creates new markets for American businesses not just at home, but also around the world.
- Convene world leaders at a global climate summit in the first 100 days of the Bennet Administration to reassert American leadership and set even more ambitious targets for 2030.
- Initiate a Next Generation Climate Board of Directors comprised of youth leaders to ensure that their energy and ideas are part of the solution.

On Day 1, the Bennet Administration will launch an initiative to engage people from across the country to develop America's Climate Change Plan within 100 days. We will work with Congress to implement the plan within nine months. Although it's our strong preference that Congress take on this issue, if a corruption of inaction continues to prevent it, we will act through the authority the Clean Air Act and other statutes grant the President. And we will commit the resources necessary to the Departments of Justice and Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency to defend that action in court.

## FIVE PRINCIPLES TO DRIVE AMERICA'S PLAN

### **Principle 1: Reduce Emissions While Increasing Job Opportunities**

**Achieve 100 Percent Clean, Net-Zero Emissions No Later Than 2050:** In line with direction from global scientists, America must urgently reduce pollution below dangerous levels and achieve 100 percent clean, net-zero emissions as fast as possible, and in no case later than 2050. The Bennet Administration will:

- Take a strategic and science-based approach to reduce emissions and decrease the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Evaluate the largest sources of pollution and the potential of particular pollutants to contribute to global warming, focusing on the most effective emission reduction strategies and technologies.
- Partner with the agricultural community to identify voluntary mechanisms to reduce emissions.
- Prioritize the communities that have been most harmed by pollution.

**Build and Sustain 10 Million Zero-Emission Economy Jobs in 10 years:** Just as the traditional energy economy has employed millions of Americans with high paying jobs that are integrated in all sectors of the workforce, the next generation of energy and agricultural technologies must provide high quality, high paying jobs to a broad cross-section of America's diverse population. The Bennet Administration will:

- Focus job creation in communities most disrupted by the transition to a net-zero emission economy, that past pollution has most harmed, and that climate change now most severely affects.
- Prioritize employment opportunities for veterans.
- Require federal contractors and subcontractors involved in this effort to pay their employees the local prevailing wage.
- Promote the manufacturing of zero-emission technologies in America, including the manufacturing of zero-emission vehicles.

**Cut Energy Waste in Half by 2040:** We must cut in half energy waste in our buildings, cars, and water infrastructure, while investing in energy efficiency and infrastructure jobs. The Bennet Administration will:

- Invest in zero-emission and flex-fuel vehicles and infrastructure.
- Deploy distributed water systems to cut energy use.
- Collaborate with the private sector to improve energy efficiency in buildings and vehicles.
- Prioritize opportunities to cut waste in communities that have been most harmed by pollution.

## **Principle 2: Conserve Resources to Improve Economic Opportunities For the People Working Our Lands**

**Partner with American Agriculture to Lead the Global Fight Against Climate Change:** The agricultural community is already implementing leading, innovative, and voluntary strategies to reduce and sequester emissions faster than other sectors of the American economy. The Bennet Administration will partner with farmers, ranchers, and foresters to:

- Increase the effectiveness of voluntary markets and government partnerships that support soil health, reforestation, wetlands restoration, conservation, and drive up the income of the people working our lands.
- Assist farmers and ranchers to transition to voluntary carbon sequestration practices.
- Grow financial incentives for farmers and ranchers to invest in the production of zero-emission energy, which could be our newest cash crop, and enhance their ability to pass their land onto the next generation.
- Provide economic certainty to producers to grow and invest in advanced biofuels.
- Invest in early stage agricultural research through the creation of a new research agency at the Department of Agriculture called ARPA – TERRA. This agency will finance the development of innovative agricultural technologies, to expand economic competitiveness, sequester carbon, fight infectious disease, and build economic opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.
- Provide economic certainty to producers to grow the biofuels market and invest in advanced biofuels.
- Streamline bureaucratic red tape to allow us to bring innovative American agricultural technologies to market as quickly and as safely as possible.
- Reduce food waste 75 percent by 2030 by, for example, creating incentives to transition food to food banks and converting food waste into energy.
- Provide incentives to create local and regional food systems, including food processing, that reduce the distance food travels, enable smaller producers to set their own prices, and encourage schools to purchase locally grown produce.

**Set an Historic and Ambitious Target to Conserve America's Lands and Oceans by 2030:** Scientists have established that to remain below a 1.5°C rise in average global temperature, we must conserve 30 percent of the planet by 2030. In addition, sequestering carbon emissions in our ecosystems is one of the lowest cost methods to reduce carbon emissions globally. We must capitalize on the role of our ecosystems to decrease carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of heat, drought, flood, and fire caused by climate change in a way that empowers the farmers, ranchers, and foresters working our lands. The Bennet Administration will:

- Make a national commitment to conserve 30 percent of America's lands and oceans by 2030, and design this national commitment to reflect America's values, including:
  - Supporting hunting, angling, ranching, and farming on America's conservation lands.
  - Respecting private property rights and working with land owners that are willing sellers. For example, there are more than 200 landowners in North Dakota and South Dakota who are interested in putting a portion of their marginal farming land into a conservation easement, but the programs are oversubscribed.
  - Growing economic opportunities for the people working our lands and for the outdoor recreation economy.

- Encourage other countries to make their own conservation commitment.

**Deploy Renewable Energy on Our Public Lands and Waters:** Working in coordination with the conservation community, the Bennet Administration will accelerate permitting for renewable energy projects on public lands and waters, with the goal of increasing renewable energy capacity to 150 gigawatts by 2030, enough to power nearly 45 million homes.

### **Principle 3: Invest in Infrastructure, Innovation, and Science at Home and Abroad**

**Catalyze \$10 Trillion in Private Sector Investment in Innovation and Infrastructure at Home and Abroad:** The Bennet Administration will create a Climate Bank to deploy \$1 trillion in federal funding to catalyze \$10 trillion in private sector innovation and infrastructure investment in climate technologies at home and abroad over ten years. The Climate Bank will collaborate with states and the private sector, not Washington, to deploy U.S. capital to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decrease climate risks faster than current market conditions allow. The Climate Bank will issue debt, equity, grants, subsidies, guarantees, and political risk insurance, and enhance the ability of states to sell revenue bonds for infrastructure:

- At home, the Climate Bank will invest in American universities and innovators to develop zero-emission technologies and rebuild American communities to withstand the effects of climate change. The Bennet Administration will prioritize investments in workers and communities that are most affected by climate change, the transition to zero-emission technologies, and that have been most harmed by pollution.
- Internationally, the Climate Bank will provide a mechanism for America to reestablish our global leadership by investing in the development of goods and services that can be exported and deployed abroad to address climate change. Examples of opportunities for investment include climate-friendly agricultural products, software, energy storage, wind turbines, biofuels, alternatives to super-polluting chemicals, and resilient and green infrastructure.

**Invest in Climate Science and Monitoring:** To better measure our climate progress and develop innovative technologies to solve our greatest challenges, the Bennet Administration will drive investment to:

- Bolster federal research in climate science to better reflect the magnitude of the climate problem, including focusing on improving sea-level and heat content measurement systems, minimizing uncertainty around climate sensitivity, and quantifying aerosol forcing.
- Lead the world to strengthen the global climate monitoring system for greenhouse gas emissions and improve the global warning system for extreme weather events in collaboration with the private sector.

**Protect Public Health:** We must address the health effects of climate change from heat waves, floods, droughts, infectious diseases, air and water pollution, and the general compromise of our wellbeing, especially for vulnerable populations. The Bennet Administration will:

- Establish a federal research budget for climate change and health across relevant agencies, including creating a dedicated climate change research program at the National Institutes of Health.

- Reorient the organization and mission of the Department of Health and Human Services and all other relevant federal agencies to better reflect the magnitude of the climate crisis.
- Create an Office of Climate and Environmental Justice at the Environmental Protection Agency to mitigate harm to the communities that have been most affected by pollution.
- Promote the development of zero-emission technologies that reduce traditional air pollution.
- Contribute to international efforts to better understand and manage the health risks of climate change.
- Improve methods to quantify the co-benefits of addressing climate change.

## **Principle 4: Empower People and Governments to Solve Climate Change**

**Increase Consumer Power and Choice by Providing a Climate X Option:** Every American should be able to help address climate change by having the opportunity to choose clean energy, zero-emission vehicles, and energy efficiency in their homes. The Bennet Administration will create:

- A Climate X Option to Purchase 100 Percent Clean, Net-Zero Emission Electricity: Eighty-eight percent of American rural coops, providing power to 56 percent of the nation's landmass, offer their customers the choice of 100 percent renewable electricity. The Bennet Administration will require every private and government-owned power provider to offer every household and business the option to purchase zero-emission electricity at a low cost.
- A Climate X Option to Use a Zero-Emission Vehicle or Low-Carbon Transit: Ten states currently provide tax credits to manufacturers to sell zero-emission vehicles. The Bennet Administration will:
  - Require every U.S. vehicle manufacturer to sell at least one affordable zero-emission vehicle and one flexible fuel passenger vehicle model.
  - Through a combination of tax credits and incentives to states, provide every American the option to use a zero-emission vehicle or transit program.
- A Climate X Option to Cut Energy Bills for Struggling Families: Instead of spending more than \$7 billion each year to subsidize fossil fuels, the Bennet Administration will:
  - Offer retrofits and access to zero-emission energy like community solar to the 7 million struggling families, including renters, that have to choose between paying their energy bill or buying food or medicine every month.
  - Require new federally subsidized housing to be energy efficient, resilient, and powered by zero-emission energy.

**Launch a 2030 Climate Challenge:** Each state should address climate change as fast as possible and on its own terms, not Washington's, based on its population, resources, and risks. The Bennet Administration will develop a 2030 Climate Challenge that provides additional federal infrastructure funding to state governments that reduce emissions and climate risks faster. The 2030 Climate Challenge will:

- Call on state and local governments to create their own plans to achieve net-zero emissions as fast as technologically feasible by 2030.
- Offer states that submit their plan within the first six months of the Bennet Administration the opportunity to compete for bonus federal infrastructure and innovation funding to meet and exceed the targets in their own plans.

- Measure each state's progress by its ability to achieve the following criteria: reduce emissions; sequester carbon in our ecosystems; increase high-quality job opportunities and training; assist communities that have experienced harmful levels of pollution; coordinate with other states to accelerate permitting timelines for zero-emission technologies, including electric grid transmission and resilient infrastructure; reduce climate risks; improve public health; procure low carbon products; lower the cost of energy; empower communities and workers affected by climate change and the transition to zero-emission technologies; and leverage private and philanthropic sector funding.
- Level the playing field by measuring progress based on each state's unique starting place.
- Provide the largest funding to states that achieve the most emissions reductions, create the most high-quality zero-emission jobs, and reduce the largest climate risks—taking into consideration the criteria outlined above—by 2030.

## **Principle 5: Promote Climate Security at Home and Abroad**

**Approach Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier and Source of Global Instability:** The energy and climate security risks of the future are diverse and expansive. Around the world, climate change and extreme weather will create more poverty, food and water insecurity, and political and social instability. The Bennet Administration will restore American leadership in the world and:

- Work with global allies and partners, not only to develop the most innovative technologies to address the cause and effects of climate change, but also to prepare for the political, economic, and security repercussions resulting from food insecurity, environmental degradation, and the transnational movement of infectious disease.
- Address the needs of climate refugees around the world. The United States must take a leadership role and work with allies and partners to develop a plan to meet the needs of the millions of individuals already displaced by the effects of climate change.
- Develop a forward looking and inclusive plan to address the humanitarian, security, and geopolitical ramifications resulting from increased mass migration resulting from climate change.

**Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change on Our National Security and Infrastructure:** We must understand and address the national security threats posed by climate change and work to reduce those threats while increasing our ability to respond. Between 40 and 50 percent of the casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq resulted from attacks on fuel convoys. The Bennet Administration will:

- Invest in clean energy to reduce the use of fossil fuels by the U.S. military and decrease reliance on dangerous logistics chains.
- Devote military, intelligence, and diplomatic resources to analyzing climate change threats.
- Invest in the resiliency of our military infrastructure. Extreme weather in the last year resulted in costly damage to the Air Force's advanced fighter fleet and the base that is home to U.S. Strategic Command. U.S. bases must develop weather and climate resiliency plans, and new military construction plans must consider the effects of climate change.
- Invest in critical infrastructure, such as electric grids and communication technology, to protect against the effects of extreme weather, climate change, cyber-attacks, and physical sabotage at home.

## ENFORCEABLE TIMELINE FOR ACTION

### **DAY 1**

- Issue an Executive Order to establish the American Climate Council—a diverse coalition that will develop “America’s Climate Change Plan” by Day 100.
  - The Council will include seats for organized labor, representatives of rural America, scientists, environmental and business leaders, and more.
  - The five principles will guide the Council to develop a plan to achieve 100 percent clean, net-zero emissions as fast as possible and no later than 2050.
- Rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and other climate agreements and negotiations.
- Reverse the last administration’s damaging decisions for our climate, including the reinstatement of standards for clean power, efficient vehicles, hydrofluorocarbons, methane capture, and food waste.

### **WEEK 1**

- Require Congressional leaders to begin drafting comprehensive legislation in coordination with the Council.
- Set a September 22, 2021 deadline to pass legislation for America’s Climate Change Plan.
- Begin developing an ambitious U.S. 2030 climate target to submit to the United Nations.

### **MONTH 1**

- Task the Council with traveling the country to the most innovative and the hardest hit local communities, states, farms, ranches, technology companies, and businesses to learn what is working and what is at risk.
- Initiate a Next Generation Climate Board of Directors comprised of youth leaders to ensure that their energy and ideas are part of the solution.

### **DAY 100**

- Announce America’s Climate Change Plan and an inclusive public comment process.
- Meet with and give a progress report to the Americans with the biggest stake in our changing climate—the next generation.
- Convene world leaders at a global climate summit in Colorado on March 22, 2021 to reassert American leadership and set even more ambitious targets for 2030.
- Submit the U.S. 2030 climate target to the United Nations.

### **MONTH 6**

- Publish state government plans submitted for the 2030 Climate Challenge.

### **MONTH 9**

- Sign America’s Climate Change Plan into law.
- If legislation is not completed by September 22, 2021, use executive authority, through the Clean Air Act and other statutes, to implement America’s Climate Change Plan.